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Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 28 July 2016, at 10 a.m.

Temporary President: Mr. Oh Joon ..... (Republic of Korea)
President: Mr. Shava ..... (Zimbabwe)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Temporary President** declared open the 2017 session of the Economic and Social Council.

2. *A short video of some of the highlights of the work of the Council over the previous 12 months was shown.*

3. **The Temporary President**, reflecting on the work accomplished during his tenure as President, said that 2016 had been a landmark year in which the Council had moved from commitments to action by supporting the early implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other critical global agreements of 2015. Having celebrated the seventieth anniversary of the Council, and faced with a variety of global challenges, the journey had begun to achieve the most ambitious development agenda in history.

4. The world was changing as a result of globalized processes, such as the high mobility of goods and services, large-scale human migration and seemingly endless innovation in science and technology. However, globalization was not a neutral process. While there were significantly positive effects on people's well-being, some were gaining more than others. For too many, the benefits of globalization either came too slowly or not at all. Inequalities were rising, making more people's lives difficult. Unsustainable production and consumption had led to global climate change that threatened the very future of the planet.

5. A central challenge for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals was therefore to ensure that globalization became a positive force for development for all of humanity. The Council had taken its work forward in that direction throughout the 2016 session. For example, the high-level political forum on sustainable development had been successfully held under the theme of ensuring that no one was left behind, and the national review of 22 volunteer countries had set the stage for the follow-up and review of the Goals in the coming years.

6. The Council's entire system, including functional and regional commissions, committees and expert bodies, had contributed to advancing sustainable development. The Council had provided leadership and policy guidance for integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development and had explored ways for the United Nations system to respond more effectively to changes in the development landscape and to humanitarian emergencies. Its discussions had pointed to the imperative of new ways of thinking and working by engaging all stakeholders.

7. A key challenge was how to develop the structure of the Council system to make it fit for purpose in the context of the entire United Nations development system. A new, important part of the Council's work was to prepare and hold forums for all Member States, such as the high-level political forum, th forum on financing for development follow-up and the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals. Such forums allowed all Member States to participate on an equal footing and to address key areas for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. That was the correct approach, given the importance of the development agenda to the global community, and the new tasks given to the Council had helped to strengthen its function.

8. However, as a result of those new tasks, the mandated areas designated to Council members by the Charter of the United Nations had become blurred when it came to development issues. The necessary changes to the Council in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals would therefore need to be incorporated into a vision of more comprehensive structural reforms and enhanced coordination. In that regard, the independent team of advisers that had contributed to the dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system had provided some helpful and concrete proposals, which included measures to enhance system-wide governance of the United Nations development system, the establishment of a Sustainable Development Board and a review of the composition and working methods of governing bodies.

9. Another challenge was to make the agenda and working methods of the Council more relevant in responding to global changes. The agenda needed to be reviewed more systematically to ensure that no item remained merely due to inertia. Moreover, while the principle of consensus building must continue to be respected, that should not mean that every Member State had veto power and the ability to block the work of the Council. Another important way of enhancing

the agenda's relevance could be found in the Council's timely responses to emergency situations. During his time in the Bureau, for example, three special meetings had been held to address global emergencies, providing timely and credible information on emerging crises and supporting the search for joint solutions.

10. The unique mandate of the Council to engage civil society was also critically important. In that regard, he had recently sent a letter to the Chair of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to consider ways to improve that Committee's working methods and thereby facilitate decisions on applications for consultative status.

11. Finally, a new mindset and attitude were required to overcome the outdated divide between the groups of developed and developing countries. A win-win approach to development was not only possible, but almost inevitable, since both groups needed each other to ensure successful development cooperation. The efforts and commitments of all Member States to ensure win-win outcomes were critical to the work of the entire United Nations development system and the Council should remain the central platform for North-South cooperation.

Agenda item 1: Election of the Bureau

12. **The Temporary President** said that, according to the principle of equitable geographical rotation among the regional groups, it was the turn of African States to nominate a candidate for President. He therefore took it that the Council wished to elect Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), who had been nominated by those States, to the post of President of the Council.

13. *It was so decided.*

14. *Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe) was elected President by acclamation.*

15. *Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe) took the Chair.*

16. **The President**, noting that the election of the Vice-President of the Council from Asia-Pacific States would be held at a later date, said that three candidates had been nominated to fill the vacancies for the posts of Vice-Presidents of the Council from Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States, and Western European and other States. He took it that the Council wished to elect the candidates nominated by those regional groups.

17. *It was so decided.*

18. *Ms. Chatardová (Czechia), Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) and Mr. Thoms (Germany) were elected Vice-Presidents of the Council by acclamation.*

19. **The President** said that the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, and also Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, was premised on countries being able to attain structural economic transformation as a critical precondition for moving from low to high productivity, ensuring inclusive growth that left no one behind and achieving prosperity in a more equitable and secure world. Surmounting the many worrying trends in all societies through the Sustainable Development Goals should be the central endeavour of all countries and multilateral institutions, including the Council.

20. In the Africa region and countries in special situations, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were still largely unmet and scores of people remained in deprivation. Africa had welcomed the Sustainable Development Goals as a more dynamic and transformative blueprint for completing the unfinished business of MDGs and realizing the future it wanted. The world had better capacity than ever to meet those development aspirations. Sustainable agriculture and industrialization could be pursued by making the necessary investments in policy, technology and human resources. Economies could be structurally transformed in order to promote inclusive and sustained economic growth, while simultaneously achieving collective social and environmental objectives. Making the sustainable development vision a reality required cooperation between countries, mediated by the many regional and multilateral arrangements already in place. Enhancing the exchange of best practices among nations and regions would be critical in enhancing international cooperation for sustainable development.

21. The Council should focus on dedicating enough time to the question of infrastructure development and industrialization, especially in the context of support for African development and as a high priority for all countries in special situations. In Africa, infrastructure remained one of the key impediments to development and the Priority Action Plan of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa had estimated an investment need of $68 billion between 2012 and 2020. He therefore intended to seek the support of the Council to organize special meetings of the Council to

develop viable proposals and recommendations on infrastructure development and industrialization. Another priority should be to explore options for enhancing the partnership between the Council and relevant United Nations bodies, such as the Peacebuilding Commission, on the interlinkages between development, peace and security.

22. In dealing with those priorities, the Council should consider the linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals and the need to balance the three dimensions of sustainable development. During the 2016 session, two issues of considerable importance to the success of the Goals had emerged: inequality and strengthening multilateralism in the face of globalization trends. Inequality could be prioritized through expanding collaboration with academia, think tanks and other stakeholders, with a view to informing various policy options and building on the outcome of the special meeting of the Council in March 2016. Strengthening multilateralism could be discussed during the joint meeting of the Second Committee and the Council, scheduled for October 2016.

23. The Council system would need to enhance its leadership role and contribute to the advancement of sustainable development by promoting global norms, providing policy recommendations and supporting a coherent and inclusive process of follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. During the 2017 session, the vertical and horizontal linkages between the Council and its subsidiary bodies should be strengthened through an annual meeting of the Bureau of the Council and the Chairs of the functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies and mechanisms. Institutional innovations, including the new segment structure, the work of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the Council and the new working arrangements for the Council, must be consolidated.

24. The forthcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review must ensure that the United Nations system was fit for purpose as it supported the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, especially at the country level. Proposals discussed during the dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system had included stepping up the leadership of the United Nations system, developing tailor-made solutions, adopting multi-stakeholder approaches and cutting across vertical lines to move towards horizontal accountability and collective results. During its 2017 session, the Council might consider how it could promote a strategic and coherent direction for the United Nations development system in the new development era.

25. **Mr. Gass** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), delivering a statement on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said that all countries needed to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into their national policies and plans during the early phase of implementation of the 2030 Agenda in order to deliver on their commitments. The Council had a wide range of platforms that could support countries and their partners in making that transition. Its unique configuration could build broad ownership in different aspects of the Agenda and contribute to the follow-up and review process.

26. The 2016 high-level political forum under the auspices of the Council had focused on leaving no one behind, placing special emphasis on producing results for the most vulnerable. The reviews of on-the-ground experiences from countries would continue to be the cornerstone of the forum and would have important outcomes in the years ahead. The Development Cooperation Forum under the high-level segment of the Council continued to be a vital platform for discussing the more effective use of official development assistance and blended finance as means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. The Development Cooperation Forum was also a dynamic, neutral space for States and other stakeholders to discuss South-South cooperation and new trends in development cooperation. As an international body that served as an entry point for civil society engagement at the United Nations, the Council could bring together a wide range of partners to forge innovative solutions to common challenges.

27. His Department was organizing demand-driven, high-impact and integrated support for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and was fully committed to supporting the Council in guiding implementation of the Goals by, inter alia, providing normative guidance and tools for implementation of the Agenda, informed by departmental analysis and partners' experiences on the ground; supporting countries' capacities in key areas for national implementation, such as data and statistics, policy

integration and public administration and management; building awareness and engagement around the Goals, ensuring that they were owned by all sectors of society; and encouraging partnerships and networks for sustainable development progress, through multi-stakeholder cooperation, mutual learning and support at the national and international levels.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (E/2017/1; E/2017/L.1)

28. **The President** said he took it that the Council wished to approve the provisional agenda of its 2017 session, as contained in document E/2017/1.

29. *It was so decided.*

30. *The provisional agenda of the 2017 session of the Council was adopted.*

Draft resolution E/2017/L.1: Working arrangements for the 2017 session of the Economic and Social Council

31. **The President** invited the Council to take action on draft resolution E/2017/L.1, which had been prepared in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 68/1. The draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

32. He took it that the Council wished to adopt the draft resolution.

33. *It was so decided.*

34. *Draft resolution E/2017/L.1 was adopted.*

35. **Mr. Dixon** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that while the European Union and its member States had joined the consensus on the draft resolution they wished to reiterate their consistent position that there was no need for a high-level segment of the Council to be held separately from a high-level part of the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Council. The two meetings should be merged since there was no justification for separating them. The current status quo created confusion and added another organizational layer to an already complex mechanism. When the high-level political forum met under the auspices of the Council, it should replace the high-level segment of the Council, which would avoid the artificial duality of the ministerial declaration being issued and adopted by both bodies. In the future, there should be no thematic discussion of the high-level segment of the Council, which would be naturally replaced by thematic reviews of the 2030 Agenda. During the high-level political forum earlier that month, the general debate had been successfully incorporated into the ministerial segment of the high-level political forum, and most speakers had concentrated on the theme of the high-level political forum.

36. **The President**, turning to the question of seating arrangements for delegations, proposed that, as in the past, lots should be drawn to determine which delegation would occupy the first seat.

37. *The delegation of Nigeria was selected by the drawing of lots to take the first seat.*

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.